

Submission in Objection to Development Application 142-150 Narrow Neck Road,
Katoomba SSD 86456709

Alix Bouffet

51 Cedar Street, Katoomba, NSW

29/04/2026

To the Consent Authority / Blue Mountains City Council,

I write as a local resident of Katoomba to formally object to the above-referenced development application proposing nine buildings of up to five storeys, comprising over 200 units, serviced apartments, restaurants and visitor attractions at 51 Cedar Street.

While I recognise the need for housing and economic development in the Blue Mountains, this proposal as submitted is excessive in scale, inappropriate for its location, and poses unacceptable risks to public safety, the environment and the character of our community. I urge the consent authority to refuse this application.

1. Scale and non-compliance with planning controls

The proposed development would be the largest in the Blue Mountains by a significant margin, doubling both the height limits and floor space ratio permitted under the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015 for this site. Planning controls exist precisely to ensure development is proportionate to its surroundings and consistent with community expectations. A proposal that requires controls to be doubled is not a minor variation: it is a fundamental departure from the approved planning framework that residents and the community have a right to rely upon. Council itself has noted this concern in its Mayoral Minute, and I strongly support that position.

2. Inappropriate location — distance from services and public transport

The site sits outside the Katoomba town centre, in an area with limited access to public transport and everyday services. A development of this density and scale demands proximity to shops, medical facilities, schools and reliable transport links. Placing over 200 units in a poorly serviced location will inevitably generate high volumes of private vehicle traffic, increase pressure on already-limited local infrastructure, and create a car-dependent community poorly suited to sustainable living in a regional area.

3. Parking and traffic

The proposal will generate a significant increase in vehicle movements in an area that is not designed to absorb them. Existing roads near the site are already under pressure, and the combination of permanent residents, serviced apartment guests, restaurant patrons and visitors to any retail or hospitality attractions will create serious parking and traffic congestion. I request that any traffic and parking impact assessment be rigorously

reviewed, and that the cumulative impact of all proposed uses, not just residential, be properly considered.

4. Bushfire risk and evacuation safety

The site is located in a highly bushfire-prone area, on a road with known bushfire evacuation constraints. Placing a high-density residential and visitor accommodation development in this location substantially increases the number of people who would need to be evacuated in the event of a bushfire emergency. The Blue Mountains region has experienced devastating fires, and the lessons from those events must inform planning decisions. Any proposal that materially worsens the evacuation risk to residents and visitors in an already vulnerable area should not be approved. I request that the Rural Fire Service's assessment of evacuation capacity for a fully occupied development of this scale be made publicly available and given significant weight.

5. Visual Impact, overshadowing and World Heritage setting

The proposal's buildings, at up to five storeys, will be highly visible from numerous vantage points across Katoomba, including from within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. The visual integrity of this landscape is of international significance and is central to the region's identity and tourism appeal. In addition to broader visual impacts, nearby residents will experience significant overshadowing and loss of amenity. A development of this height is wholly out of character with the low-scale built environment of the surrounding area.

6. Environmental impact — Katoomba Creek catchment

The site sits at the top of the Katoomba Creek Falls catchment. Increased impervious surfaces, stormwater runoff, and the introduction of pollutants associated with a high-density development including restaurants and accommodation will have downstream environmental consequences. The Katoomba Falls and the surrounding creek system are ecologically sensitive and flow through the World Heritage Area. I request that a comprehensive stormwater and environmental impact assessment be provided and independently reviewed before any determination is made.

7. Short-term letting and genuine housing affordability

The inclusion of serviced apartments in this proposal raises serious concerns about the likely real-world use of these dwellings. Experience in other tourist areas demonstrates that without strong controls, dwellings of this type are overwhelmingly used as short-term holiday lets, effectively functioning as an Airbnb-style accommodation platform, rather than contributing to the permanent housing supply.

This matters because the Blue Mountains, like much of regional NSW, is experiencing a genuine housing affordability and availability crisis. Long-term renters and essential workers are being priced out of the area. A development that markets itself as housing

while operating primarily as tourist accommodation does not address that crisis — it worsens it by removing potential long-term rental stock from the market and driving up prices for those who live and work here year-round. I urge the consent authority to consider what conditions, if any, could genuinely prevent short-term letting at scale, and to be sceptical of commitments that cannot be effectively enforced.

8. Summary

In summary, I object to this development on the following grounds:

- It doubles the height and floor space controls of the BMLEP 2015 and sets an unacceptable precedent
- The location is poorly served by public transport and services, making it unsuitable for high-density development
- Parking and traffic impacts have not been adequately addressed
- The site is in a high bushfire risk area with evacuation constraints that cannot safely accommodate this scale of development
- The visual impact on the World Heritage landscape and on neighbouring residents is unacceptable
- There is significant risk of environmental harm to the Katoomba Creek catchment
- The serviced apartment component is likely to function as short-term tourist accommodation, contributing nothing to the housing crisis and potentially worsening it

I respectfully but firmly request that this application be refused. If the consent authority is minded to approve any development on this site, it should be at a scale and density that genuinely complies with the BMLEP 2015 controls, is appropriately located relative to services, and includes enforceable conditions to ensure long-term residential use.

Yours sincerely,

Alix Bouffet,

Concerned resident at 51 Cedar Street.